

TESTIMONY: Albert Delon Reed Jr.

RE: County Council Bill 35-20- Human

Rights and Civil Liberties- Fair Criminal

Records Screening Standards

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Good Day President Katz, and Councilmembers, my name is Albert Delon Reed Jr. CEO and Founder of Albert Reed and Associates. I was recently released from federal prison after serving almost 25 years on what was originally a life term of imprisonment, for a nonviolent drug offense. Upon release, I was blessed to obtain employment and housing within a thriving and safe community. The pressing need to obtain employment for formerly incarcerated people is essential to one's self-esteem. Having a place to call home within a healthy, thriving, and safe community is also essential to one's self-esteem. It is hard to build a successful life without an education, job, and safe place to call home. These basic things are often out of reach for formerly incarcerated people. Barriers to employment combined with explicit discrimination have created a time of intense difficulty, trouble, and danger.

As a community what are we to do? What are we to do when the most vulnerable need solutions? We cannot continue to take human capital out of these vulnerable communities and not put anything back. 75% of the violence we see today is economically based. The need for employment and the ability to seek a decent wage without discrimination is vital and is a step in the right direction in addressing a myriad of interrelated social equity issues.

Ban the Box Bill 35-20 is a start towards a solution which is why I ask the Council to pass this bill. It is critical that policymakers develop comprehensive solutions to this problem for all people- and particularly those carrying the stigma of criminalization- need these solutions. In such an affluent county it's time we get this done to disrupt the revolving door of release and re-incarceration and rebuild and uplift people and communities that are most vulnerable and in need of solutions. Thank you for your time and consideration.